

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS JOURNAL



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SYMBOL MANIPULATORS

By S. I. HAYAKAWA

15,000,000 STOCKHOLDERS

By BRUCE WATSON

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Symbol Manipulators

By S. I. HAYAKAWA

I WONDER if I might start by offering what may be to you a new definition of public relations work. Public relations men, it seems to me, belong with writers, teachers, preachers, artists, and advertising men, in that vast class of people who, in our times, live not by manipulating things, such as trucks, potatoes, coal, or cotton, but by manipulating *symbols* — usually language symbols — symbols that crystallize human aims, symbols that formulate human beliefs, symbols that result in human co-operation or define the divisions of human conflict. Public relations is one of the symbol-manipulating professions. It creates not bread, but beliefs; not doughnuts, but doctrines. While others who manipulate things blow up battleships or mountains, we who manipulate symbols never blow up anything but a breeze.

The symbol-manipulating professions have, of necessity, grown in importance with increasing economic interdependency in a technological world. The more industrialized society becomes, the more carefully must human effort be co-ordinated — and this co-ordination is achieved by language. The more interdependent society becomes, the more communications there must be. The need for everyone to be understood by other classes of society, by people of other faiths, occupations, other economic interests, other nationalities, is a direct outcome of this vast social interdependency which industrialization has created. And we, as symbol-manipulators, are brought in as often as not to create bridges of understanding where none existed before; or to break down barriers of misunderstanding where they stand in the way of deeply felt desires.

The result of this vast need for communication created by the modern world is familiar to all of us. Citizens of the modern world, Christian or Jew or Mohammedan, financier or farmhand, stockbroker or stockboy, has to interpret more words per day than the citizen of any earlier time in world history. Literate or semi-literate, we are assailed by words all day long: news commentators,

S. I. HAYAKAWA, until recently Professor of English, Illinois Institute of Technology; now is lecturing and writing, with headquarters in Chicago. An authority on semantics, he is author of the Book of the Month Club selection of several years ago titled *Language in Action*. His talk — "Symbol Manipulators" — was presented before the Research Session of the Annual Meeting of the Public Relations Society of America, Inc., in Chicago, November 16.

soap operas, campaign speeches, newspapers, the propaganda of pressure groups or governments — all of these trying to tell us something, to manipulate our beliefs, whether about the kind of tooth-paste to use or the kind of economic system to support — and they tell us these things sometimes for our own good, and sometimes for their own good and not for ours. We are living in a time when millions of dollars are spent each day by people who want to make up our minds for us.

The Sceptics

It is natural that this kind of climate should arouse widespread scepticism. If, confronted by the clamor of a thousand contradictory voices, we are bewildered and confused, our tendency is to say, "Let's not believe anybody!" We therefore have inevitably a large class of sceptics in the modern world — people who simply refuse to believe anything. In my own own experience I have found that such sceptics belong to two large groups: first, there is the working class group of sceptics, who tend to disbelieve all newspapers, all of the propaganda of the employing classes, and much of the propaganda of their own union leaders. They are left believing, by and large, only what they learn from face-to-face contact with people whom they have learned to know and trust. The second class of sceptics are those who are in the symbol-manipulating business themselves. They have seen, or been party to, so many phony publicity stunts, slanted news stories, or ill-advised public relations drives that simply tried to gloss over ugly facts with pretty verbalizations, that they take a kind of professional pride in not believing anything. I should also include in this class of sceptics some academic people of my acquaintance who are so clever that they see through everything — the logical

weaknesses of arguments for capitalism or against it — the weaknesses of the arguments both of atheists and believers in God—they see clearly both the shortcomings of science and the shortcomings of the alternatives to science. These sceptics of the symbol-manipulating classes are perhaps in an even sadder state than the working-class sceptics, because the latter at least continue to believe each other as partners in work, and they believe in the realities of their work. When working people dig potatoes, they do not doubt the reality and validity of potatoes. But the sceptic of the symbol-manipulating class is sceptical above all things of the validity and worth of his own work, because if all communications are suspect, so are his own. This leads to the kind of disintegration in cynicism and drink not uncommon in journalism, in advertising, and, I may add, in my own profession of college teaching.

II

But the problem of the sceptic, both naive and sophisticated, is the same problem that everyone has who lives in an age of the loudspeaker, the power press, and the mass circulation media. How does anyone find the needle of legitimate meaning in the haystacks of nonsense? How does one find the few cuts of real beefsteak hidden somewhere in the carloads of baloney? It is in this situation that, in our time, the science of semantics has arisen. Briefly stated, semantics is the study of the relationships between symbol and reality, between language and behavior, between words and their consequences. One of the basic questions of semantics then is, "What *kinds* of meaning can language convey?"

Four Divisions

Students of semantics have found it convenient to divide the functions of

language into four. First, there is the *informative* function, an example of which is found in such a sentence as "The car is in the garage." The "truth" of an informative statement is determined by looking *beyond the words and at the facts*. In other words, one looks into the garage to see if the car is there.

The Systematic Use

Second, there is language that is used to set up language. This I shall call (after the terminology of C. W. Morris) the *systematic* use of language. Before we can say, "The car is in the garage," we have to come to some agreement as to what we shall call "cars," "garages," etc. So, when we say, "This is a glass; this is a pitcher," and so on, we are giving people *information about our linguistic systems* so that information about the world may be conveyed. Language is not merely names, but systems of named and named relationships. The number system, for example, is a system of consecutive sounds to be applied in a certain, pre-established order (four follows three, five follows four, etc.). When we have agreed upon that order, we are able to make statements about number. The "truth" of systematic statements is determined by *logical consistency*.

Third, there is the *directive* function of language. A statement of the kind, "No parking," says nothing descriptive about the world. It simply tries to *control future behavior*. Fourth, there is what may be called the expressive or *valuative* function of language, in which one expresses preferential feelings toward something: "Joe makes me sick and tired," "That's a lovely hat you have on," "The free enterprise system is the finest system on earth," etc.

III

This, however, is the best skeleton of our system of classification. Language

being infinitely rich and complex, and human beings endlessly resourceful in styles of saying things, we rarely have the four uses of language in simple, clearly recognizable form. Some of the complexities can be exemplified by a few sample sentences; the full complexities can, of course, only be studied in whole pages of rich and thoughtful prose or verse. But here are some trivial samples to give you an idea of what I am talking about:

"*Magic Baking Powder Contains No Alum.*" This statement is on the surface informative. It has valuative connotations, however, since it is implied that inferior baking powders do contain alum. It also has a directive function, suggesting that you buy this particular kind of baking powder.

"*Bill is a communist.*" Although this statement is systemic in form, it can also be informative; as ordinarily used these days, it is also valuative ("I don't like communists") and directive ("Throw him out!") in its implications.

"*Best motor oil.*" Ordinarily valuative, but in technical discourse where such criteria as S.A.E. standards are previously agreed upon, this statement can be informative.

"If you spell it backwards, it spells 'Nature's.'" This is, I suppose, a systemic statement, but it is certainly used for its valuative and directive implications.

Talking Sense

One implication of this fourfold distinction is that there are at least four different meanings possible for the expression "talking sense." Writers, no less than public relations men, have to talk some kind of sense in order to be believed. One can talk sense informatively, systemically, directly, or valuatively. Each classification of language has its own criteria or meaningfulness. In

order to examine these let us look at these four uses of language at their highest development, since obviously the most important linguistic events do not remain forever at the simple-minded level of the examples I have given.

Language of Science

The sum-total of all the verified statements made in carefully refined informative language — information about the earth, the stars, about animals, minerals, plants, society, digestion, health, etc. — constitute the body of knowledge which we call science. What we call "good reporting" and "accurate description" are also high products of informative uses of language. It is the concern of the scientist, whatever his field, to describe accurately, to report well, and to increase the number, the scope, and the generality of his verifiable statements. In one sense of the term, the scientist's language represents a kind of semantic ideal.

But before the scientist can talk sense at all, he has to set up a vocabulary and a language. For this reason, systemic training is part of the training of a scientist: he has to learn chemical symbols, mathematics, systems of notation, systems of weights and measures, etc., all of which are special refinements of language. These specialized languages have to be learned before anything can be said in them. Logic is also a systemic discipline. It tells what statements may legitimately follow what other statements — it says nothing at all about the truth or falsity of statements as they apply to the world outside of language. Mathematics is also pure systemic discourse. It sets up languages of a variety of structures, enabling specialized accurate discourse about an indefinite number of actual or imagined situations. I have said that logical consistency is the important criterion of talking sense

in systemic language. In practical terms, such consistency means, in our own utterances, that what we say at moment bears a recognizable relationship to what we say at other moments. Unless some consistent relationship exists internally among the many utterances we make from day to day, we shall not be talking sense.

Directive discourse, at its highest generality, is what we have called traditionally "ethics" and "moral ideals." "All men are brothers" is a directive — a command — that we treat all men as brothers. "America First" is a command that we place America's interests above the interests of other countries. Religions, too, are powerful systems of directives, giving us commandments about our attitudes and behavior. Another class of directives is law; these are directives agreed upon by the members of any given society as necessary to be obeyed. How to proceed if you want to start a bank, if you want to solicit money publicly in order to capitalize your business, if you want to open a tavern, etc. — what not to do if you want to stay out of jail — at what rates of speed you may drive your car — all these and a thousand other items of daily behavior are governed by that set of socially agreed upon directives which we know as law. Still another class of directives is exemplified by advertising and propaganda: these attempt to control our future behavior by means of promised rewards. "Use Glowcoat hair tonic and watch the girls swoon in your arms." "Vote for Hoover and guarantee a chicken in every pot."

Directive Utterance

How does one talk sense in directive utterances? Every directive, it seems to me, implies a promise, whether trivial or grave, whether limited or general. Certain satisfactions are promised as a

result of treating all men as brothers, of putting America first, of keeping within the speed limits, of buying Ipana tooth-paste. The person who talks directives is the person who *predicts accurately the consequences of following his directive*.

Valuative Content

The highest development of valuative utterance is to be found in literature: the novel, the drama, poetry. Excellence in valuative utterance means not only that sensitive and subtle valuations have been made, exploring new areas of feeling, making new perceptions possible, enlarging human experience. It also means that the writer has not only managed to state his perceptions, but has also made the reader or listener know what it feels like to make such valuations. This, perhaps, is the ultimate magic of language: that Joseph Conrad has been to sea, and that we should feel, reading his novels, something of what he felt; that Shelley should have felt in the west wind a powerful symbol of his personal aspiration to be "destroyer and creator," and that we should, reading his poem, feel something of his revolutionary spirit.

I am not saying that literature and poetry are simply valuative, but that valuative content is a major ingredient. There are certainly systemic elements in all of art. The difference between a rambling narrative and a novel telling of the same events is that the latter is given an additional dimension by the fact that the novelist has ordered his events into a system of symbols that have a structure and a consistent set of internal relationships.

One criterion of meaningfulness in valuative utterance is what we ordinarily call "sincerity," which simply means that when a man says, "My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky,"

these words should stand for some kind of actual pleasurable excitations going on in the speaker's nervous system. Valuative language, like scientific language, must be refined and elaborated in order to make finer distinctions possible. The scientist cannot be limited, in his discussion of temperature, just to the two words, "hot" and "cold." Similarly, whatever some of our less articulate friends may believe, valuative utterances cannot be limited, as it is for too many people, simply to such terms as "swell" and "lousy." Literature performs the function, among others, of constantly refining valuative language, so that finer distinctions of valuation may become statable.

IV

Sense and Nonsense

As I said at the beginning, the task of the citizen is today, to an unprecedented degree, to distinguish sense from nonsense, confronted as we are by the greatest deluge of words per minute that human beings have ever faced. And because of the profound interdependency of the modern world, the penalties of not being able to distinguish sense from nonsense are severe. If employers believe a great deal of nonsense that is told them about labor unions, or if union members believe a great deal of nonsense about employers, the consequences are grave indeed, and involve the whole community. If we are told about the British experiment in socialized medicine solely through the nonsense of extreme partisans for and against socialized medicine, there will be no way in which we can profit from British experience. Even more seriously, if a time ever comes when nonsense crowds out all or almost all sense from radio, journalism and the mass media, so that people are thrown into a state of complete scepticism, the communications industry, by

having betrayed its basic trust of communicating accurately and well, will have created the conditions under which civilization will no longer be able to survive — because civilization depends on communications faithfully made and therefore to some degree believed. How to tell sense from nonsense is a crucial problem, therefore, to the listener, in order to ensure his own survival, and to the speaker and writer, in order that he shall not betray his trust as the mediator and bridge between all the conflicting groups that constitute society.

Must Train Ourselves To Talk Sense

Well, then, how does one distinguish sense from nonsense? I believe there is a general method in which we can be trained in this useful art. It is simply that we be trained to talk sense ourselves. Those who have disciplined themselves in talking sense can tell whether or not others are talking sense, in that same way that people who have played baseball (even if unskillfully) can understand a professional ball-game better than those who have not.

The implications of this principle for your profession of public relations is something I cannot tell you, for I am an outsider to your profession. But let me tell you how it may apply to my profession. One thing that is clear from the foregoing is that no department of knowledge has a monopoly in talking sense, since there are at least four different kinds of sense. In the academic profession there is a tendency among scientists to believe that they alone talk sense, while philosophers and literary people talk sentimental nonsense. Philosophers and literary people retaliate by holding that what they talk about is a "higher wisdom," while the utterances of scientists are "mere materialism" based on "philosophical naiveté." Never-

theless, it is clear that since all of us, in our everyday living, have need of all four kinds of sense, it is absurd for the scientist, the philosopher, the politician, or the poet, to claim that his words are more important or more meaningful than those of other occupations. In semantic theory we see the true unity of all knowledge. Valiative discourse (and an essential ingredient of public relations is valiative discourse) must be based on knowledge of the world as it is, which knowledge is a function of informative uses of language. Science, which is the accumulation of informative statements, although often claiming not to deal with values, is itself based on some of the most general values in existence, such as the preference of truth over error, of generality over the cataloguing of unrelated data, of intellectual co-operation over concealment and secrecy. Society itself does not exist except by virtue of commonly agreed upon directives, which lawmakers constantly seek to improve upon. And all other functions of language are made possible because each of them is refined by means of systemic discipline. The functions performed by our four uses of language are therefore interrelated, and no one can afford not to avail himself of the resources of all of them. Those who fail to avail themselves of the accurate informative language of the medical profession are left at the mercy of the inaccurate information of the patent-medicine ads. Those who fail to heed the highest directives of philosophy and religion obey instead the narrower directives of one's special interest group, one's social class, or one's gang. Similarly with valiative utterances: those who fail to refine their valuations through contact with the best in literature, philosophy, and ethics, evaluate none the less, but they do so with the valiative clichés of the Hearst editorial,

the drug-store greeting card, the movie-fan magazine, Gabriel Heatter, and the *Saturday Evening Post*. Those who think they can live without science live by pseudo-science. Those who think they can live without poetry live by pseudo-poetry. A thorough understanding of semantic theory has the effect, in education of cutting across departmental lines, unifying professions across disciplines formerly regarded as distinct and separate.

Set the Example

I shall not go into detail about the ways in which semantic theory affects educational practice within the various subject-matter disciplines, but I shall sum them up in one sweeping generalization. In order to train our students in talking sense, we must first and foremost set them the example. When we inform, we must give the criteria by means of which our information may be checked. When we teach linguistic systems, we must demonstrate the need of special languages. When we direct, we must show reasoned grounds in social convention or in practical consequences of following the directive. When we evaluate, we must evaluate sensitively, earnestly, and sincerely.

These are difficult prescriptions in my profession no less than in yours, because, like our students, we are all caught in a semantic environment where the rewards of life go not necessarily to him who talks sense, but to him who talks fast. Most of us have learned that technique and have practiced it successfully for so many years that we have forgotten that any other formula exists. As Wendell Johnson has said, "Every speaker is his own most interested and affected listener" — and many of us in education have talked so plausibly for so long that we have come to believe what we say.

Furthermore, in certain branches of learning nonsense has been institutionalized, so that we have to memorize large amounts of it in order to get our advanced degrees. You can take your choice of examples on this point: according to logical positivists, most of philosophy is institutionalized nonsense; according to Felix Cohen and Jerome Frank, so is much of the law; according to Thorstein Veblen, most traditional economics is nonsense; according to Thurman Arnold, much revered traditional nonsense is to be found in political science. I feel that I memorized much nonsense in literary theory and criticism for my degree in English. But whatever these areas of institutionalized delusion may be, we who are trained in them have invested too much of our lives in them to start doubting their validity in middle age. So we go on talking. There is no doubt an analogous situation in your own profession.

V

Let me sum up. The task of the communication arts is today desperately urgent. We all have so much to learn, so much to understand, so much to unlearn, in order to function at all in the modern world. Whole new areas of knowledge in science, technology, and social thought have opened up within the past few decades. Progress in technology has forced upon us the necessity, in our now crowded little planet, of understanding the peoples of all parts of the earth. More than ever, everybody needs to know more and evaluate more adequately — and if we remain stupid and ignorant about the implications of modern technology and about the nature of the peoples of Russia and Asia and Europe and the Middle East, and we therefore elect to office amiable and oververbalized gentlemen who reflect our own stupidity, there will be a terrible price to pay.

Communication

Communication — accurate, meaningful communication — is urgent. Yet, as we all know, meaningless communication floods the newsstands, all but monopolizes the airwaves, and is rapidly taking over television. In order to sort the sense from nonsense — in order that people may begin to protest the nonsense that crowds almost all else off the mass media, there needs to be developed a public passion for sense. And it is this passion that we can develop in our audiences, if we begin by developing it in ourselves.

Edmond Taylor, who wrote *Richer by Asia*, says in that book that the real enemy of mankind is the delusion inside the heads of so-called normal men. By delusion, he means what I have called nonsense — but more especially the nonsense we talk to ourselves *and then believe*. The delusions of the insane are sufficiently obvious to be guarded against, but the shared delusions of normal people — the delusions Russians have about America and Americans have about Russia—the delusions whites have about Negroes and Negroes have about whites—the delusions capital has about labor and labor has about capital — these are dangerous because they are not known by those who hold them to be delusions. Freeing the world of delusion is then a fundamental task of world peace: undeluding Europe about Asia, Asia about America, America about Europe, undeluding Russians about America and Americans about Russia, and, perhaps most important of all, unde-

luding Americans about America and Russians about Russia. When the myths are cleared from people's eyes the world over, we may finally see each other not as hobgoblins but as men. But where does one start clearing up the delusions the whole world suffers from? Taylor says that one of necessity starts with oneself; but he adds that the benefits of clearing up one's own delusions do not stop with oneself: "Any victory over delusion in a single mind is a blow struck at the accumulation of group delusions which is the main cause of the world's disunity."

PR a Mediatory Profession

To us in the symbol-manipulating professions, teaching, the clergy, journalism, authorship, public relations, this remark is especially true. We are skillful enough in our trade either to persuade others to share our delusions, or, by undeluding ourselves, we can pass on our clarifications to others. Public relations appears to me a *mediatory* profession. Mediation, more often than not, means clearing up people's delusions about themselves and others so that human co-operation can begin. And clearing up delusions means talking sense, in one form or another. Public relations has already many victories and accomplishments to its credit in the mediation of conflict and the enabling of co-operation. I hope that some of you at least are preparing yourselves for the even greater mediatory tasks before us as we grope toward the establishment of world peace.

ETHICS FOR A NEW PROFESSION

By HENRY H. URROWS

Public Relations Director, National Jewish Hospital, Denver, Colo.

PERHAPS the most fundamental step to be taken before public relations attains recognized status as a profession will be a generally accepted and respected code of ethics. It is heartening to have keen, earnest men working out a specific set of hopes in this direction, and yet it is evident that neither accord on basic principles nor understanding of the issues have yet been attained among a majority in the field.

We should take scant credit for efforts toward this end, simply because a working code of ethics will certainly be for our own self-interest and that of legitimate business. Action (or lack of it) in deciding that it is still too early to adopt standards at this time is probably wise, for a still-born code would be far worse than none at all. It must be remembered, however, that until this problem is solved in a forthright and able manner no long-range accomplishment on behalf of PR can be durable.

Research is not needed to show that lack of agreement exists on a number of points which will be eventually codified into the PR man's Hippocratic Oath. Outstanding spokesmen have pulled no punches in their specific approaches to what isn't ethical, and yet the attitude of some persons is that at least certain recommendations are high-minded policies reserved for those fortunate few who can afford them.

Rebuttal should be obvious. A new profession must in its actions surpass the standards set for the wife of Caesar. Public relations counsel and practitioners cannot afford anything else than unimpeachable ethics.

Let us anticipate some of the uneasy answers which will be presented, each a

fusion of partial, specious truths and pernicious fallacies:

1. *The Lofty Isolationist.* "Ethical practice requires no codification by an association or other group," this fellow will declare with a pontifical flick of his ash. "The dignified, honorable man will act in a professional, ethical manner no matter how well or poorly his colleagues may behave," says he.

If the founders of the American Medical Association (a group which is having problems of late middle age rather than infancy at this point in time) had felt as this man says he does, physicians today would have a not much more important place in our society than the diminishing race of chiropractors, phrenologists and snake oil merchants.

2. *The Gradualist.* After doing proper obeisance to the stubborn, obvious fact that all good things take time, let's listen to the man who is in no great hurry. "You cannot legislate the millennium," he asserts, "simply because sound progress can be gained only with steady, slow accomplishment in a healthy, virtuous direction."

It is likely that pure food and drug laws were once opposed with pious mouthings of "Now is not the time." No resistance is quite as deceptive as that of the character who shakes your hand, tells you how thoroughly he agrees with what you wish, and then cuts off your water with a flourish which postpones any real work toward your goals, along with a dictum about proper timing, during the next century, for instance. It is altogether possible that this bird is occasionally right, but it isn't amiss to suspect him.

3. *The Irresponsible.* And then we

have the man who fearlessly evades the whole issue, with a song-and-dance to be paraphrased like this. — *"The ethics of any given public relations executive can be no better and no worse than the clients he represents."* Once he thinks such lingo has your willing ear, he goes further, with *"Since all human relationships are between people, they will vary from the saintly to the unspeakable, and there's nothing we can do about it."*

It would be pleasant to relate that this speaker is an anachronism, but such a statement would be simple self-deception. Until we realize that any public relations worker worth his salt will turn down and resign accounts which smell badly, we will never have a profession. So long as men masquerade as professionals while functioning as deodorants, the public relations of public relations will remain a difficult problem. One needed accessory of any code of ethics promulgated by a professional association must be sharp teeth; the man who transgresses the law, particularly self-legislation of this sort, must be investigated and expelled.

4. *The Essentialist.* This man clears his throat before delivering the undeniable, saying, *"Ultimately, all laws are but guides to proper conduct; each man's record is individual and should be able to withstand careful scrutiny, whether or not he has adhered to legalistic niceties and possesses technical innocence gained by hairsplitting."*

We'll buy each item set forth by this friend, but must insist that a code is still necessary to define the ethics of a tribe. There is no gainsaying that by their deeds shall ye know them, but we cannot be so tolerant to let every man be his own Jeremiah. One way to avoid being taken for a charlatan, crackpot or confidence-man is to have the honest competents get together, identify what they stand for, and expose the less ap-

petizing personages who claim to be one of their betters.

5. *He Who Didn't Get the Point.* With a discouraging, inevitable lack of propriety, there will be those who will say, even after a Code is signed, sealed and extant, *"Whose business is this anyway? Isn't a professional association supposed to benefit its members, not interfere with them?"*

Frankly, this writer doesn't have any pat suggestions as to what should be done with this one. He's come to the wrong church meeting. It may be that in time he'll like the hymns, services and refreshments here, but there's no doubt that he came in through the back door.

Whenever a code of ethics is drawn up by a diverse group of articulate individuals, there is apt to be a transitional interregnum marked by a certain lack of accord before the gathering commits itself to the final draft of specific standards. There were times during the Constitutional Convention when much conversation on a high plane was rife and yet agreement on particular measures appeared altogether remote. Parliamentary procedure frequently lends itself to the pacing of eloquent snails, but it still provides for reconciliations rather nicely.

Just as the skilled physician of today has among his vocational ancestors the alchemist, the barber who let blood and the witch doctor with his repertory of benevolent curses, so the finest and ablest public relations counsel of our day have a genealogy almost as wierd. Our family tree has the sawdust of the circus barker, the poor ventilation of the early nickelodeon and the glib press-agentry limned in Dos Passos' epic *U.S.A.* It's remarkable how far we've come in a short time. Now's the time to get PR really rolling and to get that Code.

Education in Public Relations*

By DR. CLAUDE ROBINSON

President, Opinion Research Corporation, Princeton, N. J.

EDUCATION might be interpreted broadly to include self education of public relations practitioners — setting up standards of practice and so on — or education of editors, radio people, thought leaders, and the public generally on public relations, or systematic training for public relations in our institutions of higher learning. I should like to narrow this discussion to the latter definition.

One of the principal characteristics of modern life is specialization and division of labor. A need develops; men begin devoting their time and imagination to meeting that need—then a lore begins to form with axioms, principles, and distillations of experience. As the specialization warrants, schools begin teaching the lore in training students for the profession.

My first question then is this: Is public relations mostly a current fad or is it a basic profession like law, medicine, or engineering which requires specialized academic apparatus for the training of the young?

Second: What kind of competence does public relations require?

Third: What kind of training is necessary?

Fourth: What can the profession do to make education a positive and constructive force in the public relations field?

Answering the first question: It is abundantly evident that public relations is not a fad, although there are fashions

to grow out of a very basic and compelling need.

Take the field of education for example. Inflation has caught education in its tight grip. Salaries in many instances are so low that good young minds are turning their backs on teaching. Are educators to assume that the community is marking down the worth of education or should they turn to a public relations solution, namely—inform the public of the problem, show them what losses in educational values are incurring and get public support for educational budgets commensurate with present day prices?

Or take labor unions. In 1935 labor unions claimed 3,650,000 members. By 1940 the total had jumped to 8,100,000. By 1947 the total reached 14,300,000. Labor unions now speak for approximately 40% of the non-agricultural wage population.

When labor unions were small, their policies had only small effect on the nation's life. Now unions are large and what they do is of intimate concern to everybody in the country. Unions can now tie up whole industries and deprive people of goods and services. Their problem is distinctly one of how to handle power, to the public's satisfaction, which is another way of saying that they have a public relations problem.

Or take government. Some public relations operations by people on the government payroll can be fairly criticized, for much of what goes under the name of "public information" is really the use of tax monies to maintain a party or a business in power. But look at the government's public relations problem in the foreign field, particularly in respect of the Marshall Plan. If our aid is

*A paper presented by Dr. Robinson before the Session on Education, Annual Conference of the Public Relations Society of America, Inc., at Chicago, November 16, 1948.

in this as well as in other fields. Public relations has grown and will continue

interpreted by Europeans as a Christian act, motivated by the desire for world peace, we will get one reaction in Europe. However, if this aid is interpreted the communistic way, as a manifestation of American imperialism or as a selfish maneuver to keep America from going into an economic depression, quite a different public opinion will result.

PR in Business

Or take the public relations problem of business. The whole secret of the rise in the American standard of living revolves around the word "productivity" yet there are many people in our industrial community who argue that they can get higher wages by producing less. In order to get workers to be the most productive, it is necessary to explain to them how their ends are served by productiveness.

Again, after the war the country was rocked with disastrous strikes, the goal of which was higher wages without increased prices. The economic fact is that most of cost is represented at some stage of the productive process by wage payments. The only way that wages can be raised without increasing prices is through increased productivity. Without increased productivity, a wage increase must of necessity be followed by an increase in price, lest companies go bankrupt. If through public relations efforts this simple idea could have been gotten into the heads of labor leaders and union members, the devastating postwar strikes might not have occurred.

I am one of those who believe in the balance-sheet test for public relations in business. The purpose of business is to serve the public by producing the goods and services at a profit, and do it within the concepts of morality laid down by the community. Many companies fail to serve the public at a profit because the operating condition known as public

opinion is out of control.

Quite obviously then, public relations is not a fad but a basic specialization growing out of an important need. The public relations profession requires the best young brains and the best training possible. Schools of higher learning can and should set up training apparatus in the full confidence that it will be required for the long pull.

Going on to our second point, I should like to examine the public relations man's job and ask what kind of competence is required. The formula for good public relations is X plus Y , where X equals the deed and Y equals the interpretation of the deed. Every public relations man who is worth his salt knows that both the X and Y are necessary factors in the equation. Good interpretation does not make up for bad deeds, nor do good deeds necessarily speak for themselves. Good deeds must always be interpreted or one may get credit for doing bad deeds.

Two Requisites

The capacities required by the public relations man, therefore, are broadly two: Capacity to deal with policy, particularly that of institutional nature, and secondly, skill in two-way communication.

In going about his work, the competent public relations man always looks first at the X factor—the deed—in the public relations equation. He asks: Is the product right? Does it satisfy the market? Does the company behavior square with the community's conception of fair play? If the X factor needs to be changed, he recommends change.

A notable example of this is the work of the National Physicians Committee. Some years back, the medical profession was not convinced that it should support medical insurance. Research, however, showed that people wanted an easier

way to pay for medical care and would welcome medical insurance. When the facts were made available, the National Physicians Committee took up the advocacy of voluntary sickness insurance and drew up plans for this insurance. This is a case where good public relations called for an alteration in the X factor, or the deed.

The Y side of the public relations equation has to do mostly with communication. It is the public relations man's duty to communicate the public's attitudes to management, to be taken into consideration in policy formation. Once policy is decided, public relations must shoulder the burden of interpreting it, at least on the institutional side, to the various publics. Thus communications skill is a prime requisite in the practice of public relations.

To be able to think in terms of policy and communication, a public relations man must have knowledge in many fields.

He must know something about the principles which govern organizations: for example, the philosophy of line and staff; the idea that authority and responsibility must always be linked; the difference between ordering and forbidding.

He must know something about the principles of economics.

He must know something about how governments operate.

He must know something about the psychology of various publics—for example: How public opinion forms and changes; what symbols people react to; and how to gauge public opinion.

He must have a speaking knowledge of the technologies employed by his principals. Finally,

He must have a command of the several forms of expression.

What do these requirements add up

to in terms of curricula? First it adds up to the need for broad background as well as for specific skills.

This means the study of political science:

What is the structure of government?

What is the nature of the state and how is the state related to other associations?

What is the difference between judicial and administrative law?

It means the study of economics:

How does the law of supply and demand operate?

What is the function of competition in a free-market society?

What does capital do and what are its rewards?

What is the relation between economic principle and moral values?

It means the study of sociology:

What are the various associational forms in which men group themselves?

How do associations get and discharge their power?

What is the nature of social change?

It means the study of psychology:

How does the mind absorb the stream of culture to which it is exposed?

What is the role of intellect and emotion in behavior?

What are the methods for observing the behavior of the outer and the inner man?

It means study in other fields too, such as philosophy and logic, literature, statistics, accounting, journalism, and public speaking. The main idea here is that in the training of public relations men, a broad grounding in the social sciences must be given priority. Some specific skills can be taught in colleges, but mostly these are learned in practice.

My final question is, what can public relations men do to further education in public relations?

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Has Public Relations Come of Age?

By CALVIN S. WHITE

Public Relations Director, Hawaiian Pineapple Company, Ltd., Honolulu

COMING EAST to this meeting I happened to read a post-election editorial in the trade magazine *Steel*, three paragraphs of which I think are worth quoting:

"Thousands of Republicans in industry should share responsibility for the continued and consistent failure of Republicanism over a period of nearly two decades, and should do something about it.

"This will require a complete overhauling of industry's concept of public relations. For years industry has been pouring hundreds of millions of dollars down a rat hole in a belief that if the man in the street can understand industry properly, then he will support it staunchly. The cold truth is that the average citizen has more faith in industry and in the free enterprise system than he has in the ability of some of industry's leaders to administer the system properly.

"We suggest that part of the effort made in the past to sell industry to the public be devoted to directing industry's affairs so that the average man actually receives his proper share of industry's benefits in a form that he can easily recognize. When that has been accomplished there will be no need to sell him anything."

Obviously such advice is easier to give than it is to take. Moreover, it probably would be more accurate to say that the average man already does receive his proper share of industry's benefits, but that he fails to recognize them.

His failure of recognition, however, is his failure in public relations.

It seems to me that a meeting of this kind is an appropriate time for some frank and honest stock-taking. We must admit that in a good many instances public relations has failed to live up to its promises. Often it has been oversold.

Dr. Claude Robinson has just said that as a result of this last election, the people who are in the business of meas-

uring public opinion will approach their tasks with more caution and more humility. Some of that humility is needed among those of us who purport to "mold the mass mind," as well as among those who endeavor to "measure" it. (If indeed there is any such thing as a mass mind.) We would also be well advised to adopt a more humble attitude without waiting for a kick in the pants such as the poll-takers have just received.

We hear a great deal about how "the public relations profession is growing up." Some say that it has "come of age." I personally believe that it is growing up, but in comparison with other professions it really is still in its adolescence. Some of us have been so anxious to dodge the label of press agent that we have been willing to put on the necklace of human teeth worn by the medicine man or soothsayer. We have sometimes rashly assured our principals or clients that our mysterious "techniques" could accomplish almost anything, from getting publicity to doing next Monday morning's wash.

When public relations really comes of age, perhaps we will not even use that term. Certainly that will be all right with me, because in spite of the hundreds of speeches and articles I have heard and read on this subject, I have never yet found "public relations" defined to my own satisfaction. Since "public" means everybody, and "relations" means everything, the term "public relations" is in itself a token of one's willingness to try to be all things to all people.

When this profession comes of age, we also will be able to afford greater candor about the practical limitations of the things in our bag of tricks.

We will see a shift in emphasis (and I think that it is already taking place) from good words to good works, from "molding the mass mind" to winning the friendship of individuals — and especially of employees and neighbors, from "techniques" and bright ideas to the commonsense, obvious things that make those who know you like you.

We will also see a shift from preoccupation with the broad, often vague, area of "public relations," to greater emphasis on the more specific, clearly defined area of community relations. Community relations of course embraces, as its most important elements, the creation and maintenance of good relations with employees and with stockholders. It involves the strong and con-

tinuous identification of the company, and of its employees as individuals, with the improvement and progress of the community. It means instilling friendliness and understanding in all of the many points of contact between the company and its community, or communities. Last, and only last, it means an intelligent policy of publicity and advertising.

The mark of maturity in our profession will be found in our ability to handle this phase of business life more effectively. It will be found in our ability to remove some of the hocus-pocus from the so-called techniques of molding minds abroad, and to deliver the goods on the simple, commonsense things that need doing at home.

** One of the papers presented before the Open Forum of the Annual Meeting of the Public Relations Society of America, Inc., Chicago, November 16-17, 1948.*

Education In Public Relations

(Continued from Page 13)

I do not agree that education is none of our business. On the contrary, it must be a very important part of our business. There is a great gap between the practice and teaching of public relations, and this gap should be filled as rapidly as possible. The first thing to do, it seems to me, is for public relations men to tell educators what kind of training a public relations man needs. We should give educators a feel of the problem. Our role should be advisory. We should not attempt to tell educators what to do.

Secondly, we should give educators help by furnishing teaching materials. Public relations frequently deals with intimate matters and it is not possible to open the filing cabinets of our principals, but there are many cases that illustrate great and basic public rela-

tions axioms which can be made available. We must facilitate the flow of this kind of material as much as possible.

Again there is need to arrange exchanges where practitioners lecture and teachers try their hands at practice. In my observation, practitioners could make good use of more theory, and theorists would be better theorists if they had more practice. Closer liaison between practitioners and theorists is bound to exercise constructive influence on the profession.

There is great competition today between industries for outstanding young talent. As this profession looks toward the future it can do much to insure its soundness by attracting the best young minds and giving them an adequate training for the job ahead.

PRSA

- Report on activities
- Committee appointments
- Board meets in April
- 1949 Annual Meeting scheduled

THE AFFAIRS of the Society are moving forward under the new administration. The Executive Committee, chaired by Samuel D. Fuson meets early each month to guide the progress of the Society. At its January 6th meeting a number of important decisions were reached. Standing and special committees were appointed to serve during 1949, a meeting of the Board of Directors was set, and the time and place of the Second Annual Conference of the Society were determined, among other things.

Nominations for various standing and special committees were submitted by President Averell Broughton and met with unanimous approval. Committee appointments are as follows:

Eligibility Committee

One of the most important committee assignments is that of the Eligibility Committee which is charged with maintaining the high standards of membership established for the Society. The splendid work done by the interim committee during the previous year led to its reappointment for 1949. The nine man Eligibility Committee is under the chairmanship of Marvin Murphy, N. W. Ayer & Son, Inc., New York, who will serve for a two-year term. Other appointments and their tenure are as follows:

One-year term — Russell G. Creviston, Crane Co., Chicago; L. Richard Guylay, Public Relations Consultant, New York; Richard B. Hall, Public Relations Counsel, Washington, D. C.

Two-year term — Monroe Campbell, Jr., Campbell-Wirtz Associates, Phila-

delphia; Alfred McClung Lee, Wayne University, Detroit.

Three-year term — George M. Carnes, Public Relations Consultant, New Orleans; Everett T. Marten, Public Relations Counsel, New York; N. J. L. Pieper, Consultants, Ltd., San Francisco.

Education

The second of the standing committees to be appointed is the Educational Committee. Last year the work of this committee contributed importantly to the Society and it is anticipated that the current year will place even heavier demands upon this group. Alfred McClung Lee, Wayne University, Detroit is General Chairman of this committee with George Pettitt, University of California, Berkeley, Western Regional Vice-Chairman; Kalman Druck, Carl Byoir and Associates, New York, Eastern Regional Vice-Chairman; and Marvin Black, University of Mississippi, Southern Regional Vice-Chairman. Other members of this committee are: Edward Lyman, Fordham University, New York; Harold Schellenger, Byer & Bowman, Columbus; and Rex Harlow, Public Relations Institute of the West, San Francisco.

Professional Standards

Tackling one of the most difficult assignments facing our Society is the large committee on professional standards under the chairmanship of Homer Calver, Paper Cup and Container Institute, New York. In naming the personnel to this committee every effort was made to secure adequate representation of the several fields within public relations —

private counsel, internal directors, non-profit groups, trade associations, etc. — and geographical distribution.

Members are: Jno. M. Cannon, Public Relations Counsel, Detroit; Mark Ogden, Spencer W. Curtiss, Inc., Indianapolis; E. A. Cunningham, Shell Oil Company, San Francisco; Boyd McKeown, Board of Education, Methodist Church, Nashville; Vernon R. Churchill, Oregon Journal, Portland; Russell Creviston, Crane Company, Chicago; Robert Henry, Association of American Railroads, Washington, D. C.; Verne Burnett, Public Relations Counsel, New York City; Louis B. Lundborg, Stanford University, California; Mrs. Sallie E. Bright, National Publicity Council for Health and Welfare Services, Inc., New York; Henry H. Urrows, National Jewish Hospital, Denver; Thomas E. Carskadon, The Twentieth Century Fund, New York; William Wirtz, Campbell-Wirtz Associates, Philadelphia; Burns Lee, Rexall Drug Company, Los Angeles; Mrs. Hazel Ferguson, Evanston, Illinois; Thomas D. Yutzy, Dudley, Anderson and Yutzy, New York; Neil Dalton, Courier-Journal, Louisville; Irwin M. Nathanson, Win Nathanson, New York; Norman Draper, American Meat Institute, Chicago.

Annual Awards

At the Chicago meeting of the Society the by-laws were amended to make the committee on awards a "standing" committee, with membership on a one, two and three-year basis so that the experience of prior years will be available to the committee in its future deliberations. It will be the province of this committee to determine the recipients of the Society's annual awards; to maintain the high standards that have, over the years, made these awards significant in the activities of the parent bodies of our Society. The Annual Awards Com-

mittee membership is as follows:

Chairman, W. Howard Chase, General Foods Corporation, New York; Thomas Parry, Public Relations Counsel, St. Louis; George Carnes, Public Relations Counsel, New Orleans; James W. Lee, 2nd, Ivy Lee & T. J. Ross, Detroit; Edgar White, Public Relations Counsel, San Francisco; Charles Horn, Los Angeles Examiner, Los Angeles; Albert W. Bates, Castle and Cooke, Ltd., Honolulu; Harold Sims, Western Association of Railway Executives, Chicago; and Julie Medlock, Public Relations Counsel, New York.

Research

Members who attended the Chicago conference of the Society are aware of the fine work inaugurated by the Research Committee in 1948 under the chairmanship of Pendleton Dudley, Dudley, Anderson and Yutzy, New York. He has accepted re-appointment. Appointed to serve with him are: Claude Robinson, Opinion Research Corporation, Princeton; Arthur Underhill, Standard Research Consultants, New York; Irvin Borders, Public Relations Counsel, Los Angeles; Clem Whitaker, Whitaker & Baxter, Chicago; William H. McGaughey, Automobile Manufacturers Association, Detroit; and E. E. Hargrave, Jewel Tea Company, Chicago.

The Society's Publications

A strong committee has been appointed to guide the Society's publications. It will recommend editorial policy to the Executive Committee and assist the editor of the *Journal* and such other publications as may be authorized. Chairman of this important committee is G. Edward Pendray, Pendray and Leibert, New York. Serving with him are: Milton Fairman, The Borden Company, New York; Henry C. Link, The Psychological Corporation, New York;

Chace Conley, Public Relations Counsel, New York; George Crowson, Illinois Central System, Chicago; C. C. Carr, Aluminum Company of America, Pittsburgh; Merrick Jackson, Hill & Knowlton, New York; John Pickett, *California Farmer*, San Francisco; Kenneth C. Pratt, Public Relations Counsel, New York; Henry W. von Morpurgo, Public Relations Counsel, San Francisco; and Hester Hensell, Public Relations Counsel, New York.

Now being considered by the Publications Committee for recommendation to the Executive Committee is a "newsletter" the purpose of which will be to keep all members more adequately informed about Society activities, plans, programs.

Nominating Committee

The committee to nominate Directors for election at the 1949 Annual Meeting has a particularly important assignment in light of the by-laws amendment approved at the Chicago Conference. This amendment changes the manner in which the Board of Directors will be constituted after this year. It provides that there shall be one Director elected by and from each chapter; three Directors at large from each of the five geographic areas and one additional Director for each 100 members or fraction thereof over 50.

The Nominating Committee is as follows. Chairman: Conger Reynolds, Standard Oil Company (Indiana), Chicago. Members: Thomas J. Ross, Ivy Lee and T. J. Ross, New York; Walter Belson, American Trucking Association, Washington, D. C.; A. G. Schermerhorn, Pacific Tel. & Tel. Company, San Francisco; Holgar Johnson, Institute of Life Insurance, New York; Allan Herrick, Security First National Bank, Los Angeles; W. G. Haworth, Nash-Kelvinator Corporation, Detroit; Maxwell Benson,

General Shoe Corporation, Nashville; James P. Selvage, Selvage and Lee, New York; and Lee Lyles, Santa Fe System Lines, Chicago.

Chapters

Nelson Aldrich, Utah Copper Div., Kennecott Copper, Salt Lake City, Vice-President, Western Region, of the Society, has been named General Chairman of the Chapters Committee. It is planned that this chairmanship will rotate from region to region within the United States with the other regional vice presidents serving as vice-chairmen of the committee for their respective districts. They are: William R. Harshe, Public Relations Counsel, Chicago, Central Regional Vice-Chairman; Maxwell Benson, General Shoe Corporation, Nashville, Southern Regional Vice-Chairman; and John P. Broderick, Doremus and Company, New York, Eastern Regional Vice-Chairman.

It will be the function of this committee to work closely with existing chapters and assist with the development of new ones. A great deal of interest has been evidenced in a number of areas in the formation of chapters. Groups have recently been organized in Washington, D. C. and St. Louis. Other groups in Baltimore, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Cleveland, Akron, and Seattle have expressed active interest in chapter organization.

By-Laws Committee

Appointed to carefully review the by-laws of the Society and to propose amendments to bring this document into line with the needs of the Society and wishes of its members as expressed at the Chicago convention, is a By-Laws Committee as follows: Chairman, E. Vernon Roth, Surety Association of America, New York; an attorney with wide association experience; and Wil-

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PORTER ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

Business is Bungling Chance to Tell Its Story
Because Too Many Executives Live in Vacuum

By PHILIP W. PORTER

THE TITLE of the speech by Dean James McCarthy of the Notre Dame School of Commerce before the Cleveland Advertising Club last week fascinated me because it was so pertinent. It was: "Is Business Bungling Its Story?" That one is easy. The answer is yes.

Whether business executives like it or not (and most of them don't), they are in the grease with the public, mostly because there is so much misinformation on the operations of business. Even supposedly informed and educated people don't know much about it and are familiar mostly with their own little spheres. And among the middle and lower levels (which includes most employees) what constitutes operating costs, how prices are set, why it is necessary to have reserves, how to figure a profit, etc., are completely in the realm of fantasy.

Just how this came about is a long story. But it is partly due to the fact that, for 16 years, the top officials of the United States government have been making a convenient whipping boy of business.

Generation Hears Nothing Else

A whole generation of young Americans has grown up hearing nothing else and no adequate defense. Those who first started to school in 1933 are now finishing their first year of college. Those who were in the sixth grade in that year are now young parents, beset

with the usual early financial problems of a family and worried about their future.

The main reason, however, is that too many executives have failed to realize that public relations is a most important part of their business, so important that unless it is handled correctly, the other parts are often loused up. Too often the head men of business have conceived of public relations as a minor operation in a subordinate department, concerned only with sending occasional bits of news to the papers. It is far more than that. In today's world, where politics and labor relations are vital in the conduct of a business, every president or board chairman needs at his right hand constantly a trusted assistant to advise him continually on public reactions, political trends and what to do about his employees.

Too Few Good Ones

Now, I'm not contending that all alleged public relations men are the smartest cookies on earth. They aren't. The really good ones are all too few, but they usually have a sense of public awareness their bosses lack. They earn every dollar of their pay in frustration and nervous fatigue, for the P.R. man's main problem is usually his own boss.

He has to keep telling the boss when he is wrong, that there will be a bad newspaper reaction or a bad political

reaction. He has to urge him to do things which the boss often considers are no part of running a business. He has to prepare speeches and statements for the boss only to have the head man murder the language and rephrase it in his own terms.

If the P.R. man decides life is just too short for all that, he gives up and turns into a yes man, then he becomes a bad P.R. man. If he persists in advising the boss honestly, yet the boss disregards him, then his life is hell.

Unfortunately for them, many successful big business executives have no keen sense of public relations. They have come up through hard work in production, sales, finance, or what not, and they know those departments thoroughly. Yet they need that sixth sense badly in today's world.

Big Shots Live in Vacuum

Too many of the big shots live in a vacuum, and talk mostly to each other. They resent public criticism and feel political pressure creeping up their backs, but don't know how to cope with it. For politicians, smart in the ways of public relations, have widely sold the idea that if a business raises prices, it's an outrage to the consumer, and if it cuts prices, it's a plot to prevent the paying of higher wages. Under this theory, business, never government, always takes the rap.

Take the matter of profits, which this year are at an all-time peak. Wages, costs and turnover are also at an all-time peak. The basic reason is that the rubber dollar is now worth 50 cents, and it takes twice as many dollars to operate. Employees believe that twice as many rubber dollars for wages is O.K., but do they admit the stockholders should also receive twice as many rubber dollars? Not so you could notice it. Yet that's the real answer. The percentage of profit to the amount of business done is about the same as when the dollar was worth 100 cents.

Tell the Story

Of course, it's silly to talk about business as a whole. There are 1,001 differences of opinion among executives and managers. Generally they pay a lot more attention to their competitors and their balance sheets than to the public, and haven't realized that it is becoming increasingly necessary to explain in detail their accounting figures to their employees. Employees are not knowingly going to drive the boss and the company out of business, if they have all the facts. Too often the only information they get comes from labor union agents, who are primarily interested in advancing their union. The management could easily counteract misinformation by taking employees more into their confidence. But not enough of them do.

The foregoing editorial — "Porter on Public Relations" — is reprinted, with permission, from the CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER of December 11, 1948. Mr. Porter is Assistant Sunday and Feature Editor.

15,000,000 STOCKHOLDERS - A MARKET TO SHOOT AT

By BRUCE WATSON

Manager, Stockholder Relations, General Foods Corporation

MARKETING METHODS can add as much to a progressive stockholder relations program as melted butter does to popcorn or a surprise compliment to the marriage relationship.

Neglect of their use, on the other hand, is like trying to shoot a 75 with a putter — or swimming 100 yards against time in long winter underwear and riding boots.

But, before going into that, may we digress for just a moment and talk philosophy — corporate management's philosophy toward their relations with the owners of the businesses they operate.

It came as a surprise to me on returning from a wartime tour of duty with the Navy to find that during my absence stockholder relations had been "discovered" by the trade press and by advertising and public relations men. To me that was about as ludicrous as a Chicago newspaper carrying headlines in 1948 that Montgomery Ward was going into the mail order business.

Every corporation has been in the stockholder relations business from the day its shares were first offered for sale to the public. For years now, AT&T, General Mills, Borden's, Esso Standard, Consolidated Edison, and Johns-Manville, to name a few, have been plodding along, reporting regularly — and usually quite frankly — to their owners on corporate developments, financial progress, business success or failure. These reports, both annual and interim, showed an awareness as far back as the middle '30's of modern communication techniques for better understanding between owners and management, the very techniques which some would have us be-

lieve constitute the "new look" in stockholder relations.

In the minutes ahead we shall refer frequently to chapter and verse from GF's experience. In doing so, I want to make it perfectly clear right here at the outset that I hold no overweening illusion that there is anything particularly precious in our long-range program and case history record. Nor do I wish to imply that equally expressive examples could not be drawn from the experience of General Motors, say, or duPont, or many others. Our program has been a comprehensive one, however, and my firsthand familiarity with it may help to underline the conviction of my part of our discussion.

It has been estimated that there are about 15 million investors in American business, of which 68,000 are stockholders of General Foods. Our owners, along with their immediate families, represent a special group in our company's public, a group equal in size to the population of a city like Dayton, Ohio.

This quarter million of potential consumers and salesmakers are not massed at one point. On the other hand, they are rather neatly dispersed among the nation's population.

Given the facts, they feel a greater sense of confidence in their investment. Given some encouragement, many of them will gladly serve as ambassadors of good will for company — and for products.

Here, briefly, are the main lines of communication which we have established with our owners to instill confidence and encourage personal action: —*Annual Report* . . . a simple, straight-

forward document setting forth all of the pertinent facts of the year's operations.

- GF Stockholder News* . . . which reaches stockholders seven times a year in three different editions; Financial Edition, which accompanies dividend checks; Home Edition, which is not technical and gives stockholders much human interest information about the company, its products, and its people; Annual Meeting Edition, a report for all of our stockholders on what transpires at the annual stockholders' meeting.
- Then, there is the *GF Christmas Gift Box*. This holiday specialty carries a powerful sales story into the homes of many thousands of employees, stockholders, and their friends.
- Every new stockholder receives a personalized letter from the chairman, inviting the new investor's questions, criticism, and suggestions.
- In addition to this, a steady stream of personal letters goes out on a continuous basis in response to the many questions our people ask about GF and its products.

Not New With GF

Is there anything revolutionary about any element of this program? A look through our files would turn up volumes of evidence to disprove the "new look" theory . . . to show that more than 10 years ago our Annual Reports and Stockholder News were fulfilling the specifications for what is hailed today as the enlightened approach to stockholder relations.

What was the difference in the attitude of the enlightened few who were practicing these methods from that of most other managements of the day? Simply this: Those who set the pace recognized

1. that owners, as well as employees, are

an integral and vital part of the corporate organization;

2. that there is no place in forward-looking management policy for the commonly accepted attitude which was prevalent then — and is still too widely held today — that the owners are a bother and a nuisance, that they should be held at full arm's length, and that at all costs they should be kept silent.

To Many Unimaginative Programs

When I tossed in that phrase "still too widely held today," I was speaking from disillusioning personal contact during the past few years with the unimaginative stockholder relations practices of many reputable companies with otherwise generally sound policies. It is all too distressingly true that most corporations still do not have a written corporate policy for progressive relations with stockholders, an active program for solidifying the confidence of their owners. In addition, many of those that do have an understanding of the problem and a sympathetic working philosophy, permit inertia to hold them back. This results invariably in a sterile program which goes little further than lip service to the principles. Only a relative handful really tackle the job with purpose, direction, and enthusiasm.

Ralph Hendershot, Financial Editor of the *New York World Telegram*, was pretty close to the mark when he observed recently in his column, "Managements have never felt called upon to seek out the opinions and comments of their stockholders. If the stockholders are not in accord with their policies, they are not in a position to do anything about it . . . The managements of big business are almost uniformly good. But that stockholders, except perhaps a few very large ones, have anything to do

with establishing policy, we have seen no evidence whatsoever."

I have drawn in these critical observations on the negative attitude of some managements toward stockholder relations to challenge your own thinking, and to establish a setting for the main theme of our discussion: the application of promotion techniques to improved investor contacts.

Studied From Every Angle

It is a source of reassurance to me that our company does not fall into the category of those which do not "seek out the opinions and comments of their stockholders." As a matter of fact, we have studied our stockholders from just about every angle. We have held them up to the light, first this way and then that. During the past eight years, we have tested their reactions on numerous basic questions involving their owner relationship in five major mail questionnaire attitude studies and two personal interview surveys. And we intend to continue our analysis of them.

On the other side of the coin, General Foods management has done much to make the owners feel that they are part of the organization. In fact, in the first issue of Stockholder News, published in 1937, we ran a box with the headline — "Wanted . . . Your Reaction." Then we wrote:

"In an effort to establish a friendly, communicative link with our stockholders, the management is setting a precedent, we believe, in making its periodical reports to stockholders through this tabloid newspaper.

To our knowledge, this is the first use of this publishing form for corporation quarterly financial statements to stockholders.

The quarter-yearly issues of the General Foods News, which we plan to continue for a probationary period

at least, will carry news of your company, in addition to the regular financial reports. Our aim is 'to keep stockholders informed.' In striving to accomplish this, we invite you to write us and give us your reactions and your suggestions for future issues."

In his letter of welcome to new stockholders, Clarence Francis, our chairman, advises each shareholder, "Your association with us — and ours with you — is most rewarding, we have found, if it works two ways. Please know that your recommendations and criticisms on corporate matters are always welcome."

In our correspondence, in our publications, and in our personal contacts with the owners, this idea is implanted and nourished. Through the years we have repeated this thought over and over — as often as we can appropriately do it.

Reduced to its simplest form, our stockholder relations goal at GF is:

1. To earn the investor confidence of our stockholders.
2. To give the entire investment community adequate information about the company by which to judge the corporation fairly on its merits as an economic and social "good citizen."
3. To encourage an appreciation among our stockholders of their self-interest in the company . . . as corporate citizens, as salesmen, and as consumers.

Successful Marketing Methods

Let us thumb through some of the marketing methods — call them public relations techniques, if you will — that have been used successfully to stimulate the interest of GF's owners in their company and their products, an interest which can be inspired, I am convinced, to the point ultimately of affecting sales results.

Digging back into our files of more

than a dozen years ago, we find more than just vague stirrings of management's sensitivity to the sales potential of thousands of stockholders as loyal users of our products.

Management Message

Once again, that first milestone publication of Stockholder News was the vehicle for a management message which seems now to have been years ahead of its time. Stockholders read:

"Your management has long known that in the hands of the army of General Foods stockholders rests a great power to affect sales of our products. This selling influence, thoroughly awakened, could exert a beneficial influence on the annual sales figures of your company.

We urge you not only to use your company's products but to recommend them to your friends and to ask for them at your grocer's. Armed with the facts in the new booklet, 'A Friend of the Family,' you are potentially one of General Foods' star salesmen."

In those days, too, radio was still a comparative infant . . . a little more advanced than television today, to be sure, but a rough comparison serves to make the point. Radio was news. GF's pioneering use of radio was news to our stockholders. And our shows were selling products. It followed quite logically that we should use dividend enclosure to promote our shows. Handy timetables told our owners when, and on what stations, to tune in such entertainers as Jack Benny and Helen Hayes. A marketing device or stockholder relations? In our book, they are one and the same in this case.

About that time, too, we were planting seeds of loyalty to company and products through the age-old medium of story telling. In a handy book, appropriately titled "A Friend of the Family," we as-

sembled a barrel full of interesting facts about the corporation and its component companies and condensed it into a factual yarn for stockholders, employees, and a lot of our other friends.

That earlier book has now been succeeded by a newer and even sprightlier one — "General Foods Family Album." Each new stockholder receives a copy of this book, along with the Annual Report and recent issues of Stockholder News, as part of his indoctrination as an owner of General Foods. Both of these books weave a bright pattern of product threads into their fabric of historical lore.

The first Annual Report of General Foods to picture the company's products appeared back in 1929. Then, year after year following that first publication, the product picture has become an increasingly important feature of the book until its acceptance today as an annual institution. The array is an impressive one, a veritable "hall of fame" of grocery product greats.

Best Read Feature

In 1947, as part of a personal interview readership test we conducted among our women stockholders, we found that our back cover picture for the 1946 Annual Report was by far the best read feature of a book full of features of many kinds.

The same study also told us something about our stockholders' ability to identify our products. In fact, the revelation set off a swift chain reaction. Last spring in Stockholder News, we used these survey revelations as the basis for one of our regular features, an editorial entitled "From the Chairman's Desk." In it Clarence Francis got off a pretty strong statement which rocked many of our owners back on their heels. He told them:

"You certainly gave me a jolt! On the

record you are the owners of General Foods, but just how interested are you *really* in the success of your company? I'll say this . . . you disturbed and shocked me when the results of a survey made recently among you women shareholders landed on my desk the other day.

The report showed that on an average *our women shareholders can name only three General Foods products.*

It also revealed that, among the cross-section of our women investors who were queried, *only 1 in every 5 of you could name 5 of your products.*

What's more, 1 in every 12 couldn't recall a single GF brand name!

The champion among you in the group interviewed remembered 13 GF products. All right, she did pretty well, but you can see for yourself that even her batting average was relatively low when you compare it with the perfect score represented in the accompanying list of your principal products."

Conclusion Drawn

"The only conclusion we can draw from the survey is that few of you appreciate fully what you have at stake in every purchase of Maxwell House Coffee, Post Cereals, Swans Down products, and the scores of other items in GF's line.

Some of you are already doing your company — *and yourselves* — a worthwhile service by taking an active part in GF's success as stockholder-salesmen.

But just try to imagine the boost to sales if every one of us used General Foods products across the board in preference to competitive brands. *With our families we total about 300,000 people.*

Consider the still added sales boost if we took it upon ourselves, whenever it seemed appropriate, to promote the regular use of our products among our friends. *Why, they number in the millions!*

I recall that in our 1940 Annual Re-

port this statement appeared above the then current published list of our products:

"Here are the General Foods products sold at retail — a few known the world over, a score or more nationally famous, the rest with a strong sectional or local following — but pantry favorites all. *These are your products — know them . . . try them . . . buy them!*"

Post the List

"Why not post this new list of your products near your telephone, on your desk, in your pantry, or wherever it will serve best as a regular reminder?"

This bit of knuckle rapping seemed to touch a sensitive nerve in an extremely tender spot. Many stockholders wrote us immediately. Some reported that they gave the test to their wives who came out better than our survey champion. Others said, "We're all for the idea, but give us a memory aid of some kind to help us out."

Are these stuffed shirts? . . . Just stock certificates numbers on a transfer agent's list? . . . Dividend hungry robots? Far from it! People like this are as responsive as the crowd in the Rose Bowl Saturday when Northwestern, on California's 30, rips loose for 23 yards on fourth down.

The big question, of course, lies in the way we respond to their interest. We subscribe wholeheartedly to the principle that harnessing this kind of human energy can pay real dividends. Our over-all conviction is backed by an appropriation in the 1949 budget to meet our stockholders halfway on this one. We are at work now trying to devise the most productive, economical product memory tool we can put together. If all goes well, our idea should see light of day — in stockholder kitchens across the country — sometime next spring.

Continuous repetition of mass photographic arrays of our products stimulates investor interest and drives the story farther home with each impression. This is a fundamental part of our program to encourage both the sales and the consumer impulses of our owners.

Nevertheless, this shotgun technique will never provide the complete answer. The list of products is too long. Even employees who work daily with our entire line can be stumped when asked without warning to rattle them all off.

To Do A Solid Job

In our opinion, the only way to get over this hurdle and to do a solid job of filling in the product memory gaps is to develop publication feature treatment of each product, one at a time. We have proceeded on this theory for many years by spotting product features regularly in Stockholder News and in our Annual Reports.

This past year we took another stride in this direction. We built into some of our editorial product features a provision for bargain mail order offers of some of our specialties, available exclusively to our stockholders. Results so far on this type of promotion have been so encouraging that we plan to use it even more extensively in the future.

Occasionally, we use our special Homemaker News section of Stockholder News as well to encourage distribution among our stockholders of recipe booklets featuring our products. About 36,000 of these utility books were sent out last spring *on request* as a result of a single offer in Stockholder News. Did they appreciate them? Here is what a Baltimore housewife had to say:

"I would be delighted to have you send my daughter-in-law a set of the books. At present she is living with us but will move to her new house on June 28. Not only do we use in our

home the entire line of General Foods products in the baking line but also the coffee (Maxwell House), the cereals, and Jell-O in our desserts, and I advise my friends that my success in baking is due to using tested General Foods products. I personally feel that it is the duty of the stockholders to do this if they expect to receive dividend checks. Every stockholder should be a GF booster."

People like that, and our correspondence proves that there are thousands of them, are part of our GF family — for keeps.

In our entire program of stockholder relations, undoubtedly the most rewarding — and most constructive — things we do to inspire confidence and be tapped by contacts with investors is embodied in our annual Christmas Gift Box offer to stockholders and employees. These boxes have been offered every year since 1934 except for a breather during the war when many of our products were in limited supply.

Along in August we announce our current holiday bargain in a promotional folder which is enclosed with the dividend check. This season our box included 29 of our best known grocery products plus a set of six individual service wooden salad bowls — a \$10.45 value, which we deliver anywhere in the United States, for only \$5.95. Sales this year ran to approximately 30,000 boxes.

In other words, in 30,000 homes our products were playing Santa Claus under just about the most ideal circumstances that could be imagined.

The Setting

Consider the setting: By its nature the Gift Box is an odds-on favorite to steal the show under any tree. It has the assets of variety, volume — and, best of all surprise. Once opened, it simply

(Please Turn to Page 29)

THE WEATHERVANE

By
GEORGE DICKSON SKINNER

GROWING PAINS

GROWTH can never be a thing of ease and comfort. We may count upon it that the growth of the Public Relations Society of America will not be like a day in Xanadu. The discipline of difficulties builds strength and vigor even when it hurts, but there are other kinds of hurt that weakens. Like pain in the body, they tell of injury or of something organically wrong.

New members are needed for the solid growth of the Society, and it is in this area that the sharpest pain seems to have been felt in recent months. Feelings have been hurt. Tempers have given visible (and audible) signs of inflammation. And, for whatever reason, the number of candidates proposed for membership has not been as great as could be desired.

This is one type of growing pain that it ought to be possible to minimize if not to eliminate, for I believe that it springs from confusion.

A Picture Upside Down

Most members planning to sponsor a candidate seem to think somewhat after this fashion: "This fellow's a friend of mine and he's doing a good job. I'd like to see him in the Society. Guess I'll put him up." Then they work up the candidate's interest in joining and ask him to make out an application. Having committed themselves so far, they pay scant attention to what the candidate writes on the application blank. They would be embarrassed to send it back, saying, "Sorry, old man, but I'm afraid you don't quite meet the requirements' after

all." They dash off a sponsoring letter, giving assurance in very general terms that the candidate is qualified for membership. And if the application is turned down, the candidate is hurt, the sponsor is hurt and sore, and the committee responsible for the turndown gets a bouquet of green eggs and fuzzy tomatoes.

The basic trouble is that the sponsor has thought more about his candidate than about the Society. He has decided that the candidate would be an agreeable, perhaps even useful, member of a group interested in public relations without measuring his qualifications against the established requirements for membership in the Society.

That order of thought means confusion as to the purpose of the organization. If the Public Relations Society of America is a trade association, a group of people currently interested in the same field, then fitness for membership should be judged on the basis of character, ability and personality. But if it is a professional society, if membership is to carry the stamp of acceptance into professional standing, then certainly first consideration must be given to specific, clearly defined professional qualifications and only after these have been met can personal characteristics be regarded. No applicant for admission to the bar is considered by the Character Committee until he has passed his bar examinations.

The by-laws of the Society establish definite qualifications for membership. The Eligibility Committee is charged with enforcing them. It seems incredible

that that committee should be expected to waive any requirement because an otherwise desirable candidate fails to meet it. If the requirements themselves are badly conceived, they should be amended. But while they stand, they must be rigidly enforced if the Society is to build up and maintain the professional standing which, I am convinced, the great majority of the membership want it to have.

Do We Ask Too Much?

In general, a candidate for "Active" membership is required to show five years' experience in public relations work at the executive level. The Eligibility Committee, with approval of the Executive Committee, interprets this to mean five years either (1) as an independent consultant, with or without assistants, or (2) in a position carrying supervisory responsibility or (3) with authority to make major decisions regarding his work.

It seems to me that the requirement is well justified and fairly interpreted. At any lower level, public relations activities may develop skill in particular techniques, but they can scarcely establish competence to give professional advice or to shoulder the responsibility of putting such advice into practice. The time requirement has to be arbitrary, but five years does not seem too long as a testing period in which a man must prove his capacity before the Society gives him its stamp of acceptance.

What constitutes public relations work ought to find members of the Society in fairly general agreement — even though the question still mystifies the layman. Most members know of cases where a public relations title has been given to a display manager or a personnel assistant or even a stenographer. Yet many applications have shown no thoughtful effort to identify the activi-

ties on which claim is made to public relations experience. Others have listed, for all or part of the required five years, work that was strictly editorial or in the field of sales management or advertising.

Surely it is not too much to require that a candidate for membership in the Public Relations Society of America show experience in public relations rather than in journalism or the Army, no matter what his title.

Yet some of the pain that attends our growth comes from the enforcement of these requirements.

Associate Membership

A candidate for "Associate" membership is required to show one year of public relations experience, not necessarily at the executive level. Anyone who can almost but not quite meet the requirements for *active* membership is almost certainly eligible for *associate* membership.

Some have feared that a public relations director would be embarrassed to apply for *associate* membership when, perhaps, his assistant director is already an *active* member. That case seems to be as close as the requirements can come to working any real hardship.

But is that a hardship? The *associate* member has every privilege save those of voting and holding office. Except when the names are posted in this magazine, few people know who is *active* and who is *associate*.

On that very ground, some members are opposed to the *associate* classification. They feel that any membership will be taken by the public as the sign of full professional acceptance and should therefore mean exactly that. The wisdom of the provision may be debatable, but the fact is that the by-laws, as they stand, establish an *associate* membership which ought to accommodate any candi-

date who narrowly misses the full qualifications.

New Members Label Old

Every man or woman taken into membership raises or lowers the professional standing of the Society — and, therefore, of each member.

You trust your own judgment on a brilliant man who almost meets the requirements. You're unhappy that you can't get him in as a full-fledged "Active" member

But do you trust my judgment on a man I think is desirable? Without strict objective standards of measurement, are you willing to have your own professional standing judged by anyone I may propose?

This Society cannot grow to a position of respected authority in the nation without rigid adherence to high and clearly defined qualifications for membership. The field is still in a formative stage, and the Society itself is a factor in the process of giving it form. Men and their careers do not yet fall into a consistent pattern as they do in old established professions. It is a major part of the Society's mission to create the sort of pattern that will enable public relations to realize its greatest potential for the general welfare. There is no reason why the process should give real pain to anyone if all members will keep in mind the long-range objectives and give them first place in their plans for sponsoring candidates.

15,000,000 Stockholders

(Continued from Page 26)

takes over under the tree. Trying to put all these products back into the box is a real test for a space engineer. As you can well imagine, the mood is about as wholesomely festive as it could possibly be. Friends drop in and want to know about the gift. The conversation turns to product chit chat. Psychologically, the setting is perfect.

What about the stockholder who gives it? From the minute he writes his check covering the order, he is an active participant in a company venture. The gift represents a personal stake of his in the great institution known as Christmas. If all goes well, and it usually does, the happy effect is pretty hard to beat as an exercise in stockholder relations, or product promotion.

The possible ramifications of the few marketing themes we have discussed are countless. Many other marketing adaptations for use in the relations of corpor-

ations with their owners invite study and trial. There is literally no limit on the frontier of ideas. The only restrictions are on the dollar front.

In these explorations here this afternoon we have done little more than leave some tiny tracks in the dust which lies deep over our subject. Nevertheless, we have glimpsed the surface, if only momentarily. And what we have seen throws down a challenge to explore beneath.

Unquestionably, we can look for much wider use in the immediate future of marketing tools and techniques in the expanded stockholder relations programs of more and more consumer goods companies. For men with marketing training and experience and with a real enthusiasm for dealing in human relationships on the corporate level, there is bright opportunity ahead in this specialty management functions known as stockholder relations.

The foregoing talk presented before National Convention, American Marketing Association, Cleveland, Ohio, December 28, 1948.

Need for a Favorable Industrial Climate

By B. F. McCLANCY

General Manager, The Associated Industries, Cleveland

THE WEATHER is something everyone talks about, but does nothing about. Too often this applies to the industrial weather of a manufacturing plant where something can be done. Too large a number of companies depend on the umbrella and raincoat of various external employee relations plans to protect them from the humidity of their own industrial atmosphere. The sun of any industrial climate is complete integrity, and for this there can be no substitute. I might observe that there are managements of unquestioned honesty that obscure this quality in the minds of their people by the confusion of their actions.

BEN F. McCLANCY is General Manager of the Associated Industries, Cleveland, Ohio. Prior to this assignment he was Director of the Human Relations Division of ATF Incorporated. In this office he established himself as an outstanding authority on industrial relations, and in 1946 was chosen by McGraw-Hill's magazine, "Factory and Maintenance," as one of the 20 leading industrial relations directors in the country asked to write on the effect of the Taft-Hartley law on labor-management understanding.

A native of Springfield, Missouri, Mr. McClancy attended the Missouri schools, including the University of Missouri. The first phase of his business career saw him rise to the post of traffic manager of the National Broadcasting Company in New York. He then entered the manufacturing field as Assistant Plant Manager, and later Acting Plant Manager, of the Eaton Manufacturing Company, Battle Creek, Michigan.

Mr. McClancy became associated with the industrial relations field when he assumed the managership of the industrial relations department of John A. Roebling Sons & Company in Trenton, N. J.

During World War II he was an industry member of the War Manpower Commission, and an industry panel member of the War Labor Board. At present he is a member of the Personnel Committee of the American Management Association.

It is impractical for an employer to draw a sharp dividing line between the public as a whole, and that part of the public that works in his plant. Employee relations is a specialized phase of overall public relations — a most important phase. The relationship that exists between the employee and his company may include every aspect of the relationship that there is between that company and the public in general. He may be a customer, he may even be, and quite often is, a stockholder, and, certainly, the policies of his firm must have his endorsement before they are accepted by his next door neighbor. On top of this is the intimate day-to-day living he does in the plant at his job. He is a hard man to fool. Therefore a public relations program, if it is to be effective, must first have his support. This is gained by constructive industrial relations practices within the plant, for the public good will is won when the man on the street has knowledge of those practices. The best way of informing him is through the employee himself. Management communications to the public do little good if the company's personnel disagrees with them, or disputes their authenticity.

Public Relations and Industry

Public relations and industrial relations must complement each other. Where there is lack of liaison between these departments, no matter how well-intentioned their directors, trouble will ensue. For that reason I have always considered that the functions of both should be combined whenever possible into one general division that deals with human relations. If this is not practical there should be a perfect coordination

of the two. Those persons responsible for a company's public relations policies must know to the minutest detail the actions of its industrial relations department. Whereas a company may give out information for internal consumption only, any story that it tells the public must jibe with the facts as the employee knows them. If feasible he should have them first. That, in my opinion, is the first step in establishing a favorable industrial climate. The employer must have a reputation for telling the plain, unvarnished truth, and his word must be accepted as such, even if there is disagreement with his point of view.

Detached Word Masters

Management executives frightened by the challenge of various collectivist theories of government, and still suffering from the hangover of the depression, are frequently sitting birds for plausible opportunists who offer plans to sell the system of free enterprise to their employees and the public. They believe because they want to believe, and too many times their subordinates who know better are forced to string along on an idea that is completely foreign in concept to the notions of the shop personnel because the "old man" has endorsed it. Cliches are put to work on second and third shifts by detached word masters in the bull pen of an advertising agency. They cook up copy that will "sell" the company's president, and make about as much impression on the average turret lathe operator as a starling flying into the Empire State Building.

The results are slick brochures and cleverly written literature on why it is great to be an American working at the Such and Such Bolt and Nut Factory, enjoying high wages, vacations, holidays, pension plans and the like, most of which the employee thinks were won for him by his union. With an eye to pos-

sible flattery the working man is drawn as a sort of Clark Gable in dungarees, a tastefully arranged smudge on his face to show the nature of his job, and a look that is similar to the early Christian martyrs when they got a preview glance of heaven.

The Product Must Be Sound

The product must be sound before the advertising campaign can be successful. At the beginning, then, it is necessary to determine who you are trying to please by your program. If it is the President of the company who likes to see his name in print because someone told him once he was an industrial statesman then the technique I have described is the best I know to make a soft and quick dollar. That is as long as prosperity is with us. On the other hand if you are sincerely interested in reaching your employees, and that part of the public that needs convincing that our system of private initiative is superior to any other, I suggest different means.

Fundamentally, I believe in proof by demonstration, and a policy of gradualness. I have seen it work. The rest can come later when the proper industrial climate has been established, and the employees of a company and its neighbors in the community are in a receptive frame of mind.

Up to this point my observations have been almost totally of a critical nature. It is always easy to point out the mistakes of others, and perhaps it is safer. However, my purpose in writing this is to give what I believe are the necessary steps in creating an atmosphere in which harmonious employee and public relations are possible.

A Plan of Action

As the Director of a company's Human Relations program I would first request the right to review any material

being published for distribution either to the public or to the employees to make certain that it was not only accurate, but completely in accord with the facts as the firm's personnel knows them. I recall an instance that occurred shortly after the war at a company with which I was then associated. We had decided to run a series of institutional ads explaining that because of material shortages our production was falling below capacity, and that lay-offs would be inevitable unless the situation was corrected.

Our most pressing need was for electric motors, and it seemed unlikely that we would be able to obtain them for some weeks to come. However, between the time the copy was written and the layouts for the ads approved an unexpected shipment arrived, and electric motors literally filled our receiving room. Because of a breakdown in communication our Advertising Department, unaware of this development, went blithely about its work of releasing the ad. Fortunately, a last minute check enabled us to call a halt, but it was a near miss. If the ad had appeared the reaction of our employees is obvious. They would have attributed their imminent lay-off to some ulterior motive of management, and thought the story about electric motors a flimsy cover-up.

Remember This

There is this to remember about selling the free enterprise system to the employee. He will buy as long as it keeps him on his job, but the minute he loses that it has failed as far as he is concerned no matter what it is doing for others. Therefore a fundamental policy of wise management should be to stabilize employment in so far as that is possible. The most pellucid explanation of the causes of a condition has little effect unless at the same time a construc-

tive remedial program is offered that wins public support.

The Second Step: Management Training

My second step in developing harmonious public and employee relations would be to establish a perfectly coordinated two-way communications system in management itself. To do this I would stress management training at every level. The courses would be designed to explain the basic principles by which the company lived, and the reason for those principles. This would give supervision an understanding of the policies that translate an organization's principles into action, and enable them to grow in judgment. Judgment and the ability to make a wise decision from an analysis of the facts is a prerequisite to any management position.

After I had brought my management organization to a point where it functioned as a smooth working unit I would turn my attention to the rank and file employees. To discover their opinion I would be guided to some extent by periodic attitude surveys. Despite the failure of the pollsters in forecasting the election, an opinion poll supplies management with a comprehensive index to those areas where its leadership may be faulty or lacking. No company can form its policies on the basis of the opinion of its people. If it did its administration would be inconsistent and vulnerable to the fluctuations of the employee's mind. But it is extremely important for a company to have an accurate knowledge of the attitudes of its personnel, and then provide the aggressive, intelligent leadership that swing the men and women on its payroll solidly behind it. The opinions of most people are merely a reflection of the opinions of the leaders they trust. If our system is to survive business men must be those leaders.

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Leadership Is the Heart

Leadership is the heart of constructive industrial relations, and that in turn is the foundation of a company's public relations program. Once the right type of leadership is provided the first objective in obtaining good employee relations is secured. Then the other features begin to have an effect. They include, internally, the plant newspaper, the pamphlets, the letters from the president to the employees, the financial statements issued to the personnel to explain the company's financial progress, and all the rest of the paraphernalia. Externally, the releases to the newspapers, articles in magazines, institutional advertising and literature not of sales nature, that is distributed to the public to win its good will.

The Case History of a Program

The case history of a program in economic education, at a company I formerly was with, illustrates what I mean when I say the proper industrial climate is all important in securing good public and employee relations. At this company I was asked to organize a human relations division to supervise all matters having to do with the relationship of people whether inside or outside the plant. Prior to my arrival a financial statement had been issued to the company's employees to keep them informed of their firm's competitive position in its industry. To determine the reception of these reports a check was made, and the company was disappointed to learn that only 35% of its people had bothered to read it, and many of these distrusted the figures given.

That year our human relations program was begun. It was of a most comprehensive nature. Supervision training was stressed, and in each course the need for leadership was emphasized.

Each member of the management team was required to have a thorough knowledge of every phase of the manufacturing operation, how his department tied in with the process, and the need for efficient overall cost control. Everything possible was done to develop the supervisor's capacity in dealing with human relations so that in carrying out company policy he could explain it in words that made it reasonable and practical to the employee. In addition basic courses in economics were given, and when these were concluded our supervisors were well-grounded in the philosophy of private enterprise, and understood that profit was the only guarantee of a dynamic economic system. We had to have the support of our front-line leaders before we could hope to reach our employees.

Training for Employees

Similar programs, on a more informal basis, were at the same time instituted for the rank and file workers. We pounded away at the economic story, and whenever possible presented visible proof of our arguments. There was resistance at first; we expected it and were not discouraged. We knew the job could not be done overnight.

The Public Is Reached

We even reached out for the public by inaugurating a series of plant tours explaining to all "thought forming" groups in our community the economics of our business. These were carefully planned affairs, never were more than thirty persons invited, and they were split into groups of about five, and led by a thoroughly trained employee guide. A Rube Goldberg machine graphically demonstrated our dollar breakdown at a luncheon that followed the tour, and which all company officers available, including the president himself, attended. After refreshments they were on hand to

answer questions. No issue was dodged, and we gave completely candid answers to the most controversial inquiries. We did not always convert, but surveys showed that our frankness had given food for thought even to those visitors of extremely left wing opinion.

A Change of Technique

The following year we changed our technique in issuing our financial statement. This time, in addition to giving the facts and figures of the company's business year, we used cartoons accompanied by a brief explanatory text to make the material presented crystal clear. A new feature was included showing how cooperation on the part of the employee, the stockholder, and the public enabled a business to prosper. The readership jumped to 65%, though still 23% expressed some doubt as to the completeness of the story.

The overall human relations program was stepped up. The suggestion system was overhauled, as were merit rating and grievance procedures. Letters were sent to the employee's home explaining every aspect of the business. Hardly a subject was not touched on. The functions of the sales department, the accounting department, the research department were described in detail. Also the plant tour program was continued and amplified.

The next financial statement showed a startling increase in readership. 92% of the employees had read it. Less than 5% questioned any part of it. A drop of from 23% to 5% occurred among the "Doubting Thomases" in the space of one year.

Of course the presentation of the statement itself was improved. The report was prepared by the Human Relations Division staff members even to the cartoons, and they had "a feel" of the company. Employees had been inter-

viewed all through the year to discover what information they wanted that they were not receiving.

The rise from a 35% readership to 92% in three years was a tremendous one. Certainly, some of the improvement could be credited to superior techniques developed in presenting the material. However, I am inclined to think the down-to-earth, practical program that went on day by day was the pay-off.

Because the reports were well designed, and had unusual features they attracted nation-wide attention. The last one in which the President's message was given by a phonograph record attached to the inside front cover, and which contained a "pop-up" like a comic valentine depicting an American street scene showing the next-door-neighbor relationship between the employee, the customer, and the stockholder was written of widely in magazines, newspaper editorials, and in straight news stories. "The best kind of public relations" said an editorial in a Boston, Massachusetts newspaper. The outside demand because of the publicity attendant to the publication of the report caused us to publish 10,000 extra copies to fill the requests of other companies, libraries and colleges throughout the country.

Ideas Novel

Sound public relations it was too, because the employees and the community agreed with the press notices. Undoubtedly, the reason newspapers used our press releases was because the "pop-up" and the record idea were novel. However, unless we had first convinced our people and our neighbors of our sincerity these devices would have been no more than a cheap trick. One of the greatest errors an industrial or public relations officer can make is to build a smooth working propaganda machine, and then fall for his own line.

A Word in Parting

The president of a company who is sincerely interested in building and maintaining harmonious employee and public relations should always bear this in mind. His public relations program may attract widespread attention, and bring him many back slaps in his club yet win little real public support. The only way to secure public backing for the profit and loss system is by making it work, and demonstrating how this was accomplished rather than explaining why it doesn't work. The masses of Americans, rightly or wrongly, think a little left of center, and there is consid-

erable skepticism on their part as to the motives of what they consider "big business." This will never be corrected by the institutional ad no matter how well conceived — how factually correct — unless suspicion of motive is first eliminated. We have got to make our stand in a positive way, or we will be struck out when we come to bat by any portside hurler with a little hop on the ball. We have got to quit defending ourselves, and come up with a constructive program that will capture the imagination of the public. We have got to keep talking, but for God's sake, let's quit talking to ourselves.

PRSA Report

(Continued from Page 18)

liam A. Nielander, Hofstra College, Garden City, N. Y.

This committee is now actively engaged on its problem and will present its recommendations to the Board of Directors at the next meeting of that body which is scheduled for April 4-5 at the Edgewater Gulf Hotel, Edgewater Park, Mississippi.

Auditing Committee

Martin Dodge, Dodge and Mugridge, New York, has accepted the chairmanship of the Auditing Committee of the Society and will nominate additional members to this committee for approval by the Executive Committee at its next meeting.

1949 Annual Meeting

At the last meeting of the Executive

Committee New York City, the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel and December 4, 5, and 6 were unanimously approved as the time and place for the 1949 Annual Meeting of our Society.

Equally important was the nomination of Franklyn Waltman as chairman of our 1949 Annual Meeting Committee. Mr. Waltman is Director of Public Relations, Sun Oil Company, Philadelphia and a member of our Board of Directors. Currently he is the Conference Chairman of the Sixth National Conference of Business Public Relations Executives which meets February 3 and 4 in New York at the Waldorf. His experience with this and other important public relations conferences will be invaluable to our Society.

Other members of Mr. Waltman's committee and sub-committees will be announced in the near future.

Book Review Section

CHACE CONLEY, Book Review Editor

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RUMOR

Reviewed by Dr. Alfred J. Marrow, Psychologist,
member of Department of Psychology, New School
for Social Research, New York City.

THE ENLIGHTENED PR consultant, professing to deal with problems of changing attitudes, customs and beliefs, must — if his work is to have any effectiveness — be equipped with a sound understanding of the psychological principles motivating human behavior.

In this connection, *The Psychology of Rumor*, by Gordon W. Allport and Leo Postman, should have top billing on the reading list of all public relations practitioners.

While scientifically accurate, this valid document, dealing with the origin, spread and terminal aspects of rumor, is a simple, concise statement of scientific fact, written in a style intended to intrigue the interests of the non-professional psychologist.

The book, which includes charts, pictures, experiments and, most importantly, a guide for the analysis of rumor, answers such timely questions as: "Why do some people have racial hates and indulge in racial slander?" "What are the basic conditions for rumor?" "How much of human history can be regarded as the reactions of important groups of people to current rumor?" "How can rumor best be combatted?" At the same time it deals with such vital matters as "Rumor in Wartime," "Rumor and Society," "Testimony and Recall," and "Why Rumors Circulate."

Many advertising, publicity and public relations experts will be surprised to learn that "information and argument are seldom sufficient to obliterate rumors that feed upon fears and hates,"

and that "it takes more than correct information and logic to silence the tongue of a motivated rumor spreader."

If this vital finding could be assimilated into advertising and public relations thinking, it would, among other things, make effectual many of the currently wasteful and useless anti-prejudice campaigns costing the public millions of dollars yearly. And of course its value in combatting rumor in wartime is obvious.

The authors point out that "rumor became a problem of grave national concern in the tense years of 1942 and 1943. At that time a high official in the Office of War Information gave a reason for rumor and a recipe for its control that were partly — but only partly correct. 'Rumor,' he said, 'flies in the absence of news. Therefore, we must give the people the most accurate possible news, promptly and completely.' It is true that rumor thrives on lack of news . . . At the same time, it would not be hard to prove that rumor also flies thickest when news is most plentiful. The OWI official made his error in assuming that rumor is a purely intellectual commodity, something one substitutes . . . for reliable information."

Delving into the motivational factor in rumor, the authors state that "any human need may provide the motive power. Sex interest accounts for much of gossip and most of scandal; anxiety is the power behind the macabre and threatening tales we so often hear; hope and desire underlie pipe-dream rumors; and hate sustains accusatory tales and slander."

Table I in the book, prepared by R. H. Knapp (1944) gives a percentage

distribution of 1,000 rumors collected from all over the United States during the summer of 1942. Knapp's analysis indicates that approximately two-thirds of all rumors then current were hostile in intent and divisive in their effects. About 9.3 percent were anti-Semitic, 3.1 percent anti-Negro, 21.4 percent anti-Administration, 19.6 percent anti-Navy or Army. "The effect of these stories," the book explains, "could be only harmful to national unity at a time of crisis."

A list of some of the monstrous rumors current in 1942 may appear ridiculous now, but at the time they were dangerous. They included such statements as: "The Navy has dumped three carloads of coffee into New York harbor;" "The Army wastes whole sides of beef;" "The President is Jewish;" "The Red Cross charges the boys in Iceland outrageous prices for the sweaters knit at home;" "The Jews are evading the draft;" and "The Negroes are forming Eleanor Clubs, in which they assemble guns and ice picks for a charge upon the Capitol."

It was the problem of wartime rumors that led the authors originally to undertake the experimental investigations reported in *The Psychology of Rumor*, which attempts to be "a unified and coherent account of the primary phenomena of rumor."

It is interesting to note that "most rumors circulate because people have an axe to grind or a nest to feather or a ghost to lay," and that the two basic conditions for rumor are: "first, the theme of the story must have some importance to speaker and listener; second, the true facts must be shrouded in some kind of ambiguity. This ambiguity may be induced by the absence or sketchiness of news, by the conflicting nature of the news, by distrust of the news, or by some emotional tensions that make the individual unable or unwilling to

accept the facts set forth in the news."

It may also be startling to some to learn that "rumor itself could be an interesting personality test," since the rumor spreader "selects from the pigment of his mental life the colors with which he adorns a tale. And little does he know that he may be telling far more about his own nature than about the incident he is pretending to report."

For instance, when people indulge in racial slander, Allport and Postman explain that "perhaps the basic reason is that the racial gossip feels insecure in his job or deprived of the good things of life."

Stressing the complex purpose that rumor serves, the authors state: "Rumors often assuage immediate emotional tension by providing a verbal outlet that gives relief; they often protect and justify the existence of these emotions which, if faced directly, might be unacceptable to their possessor; they sometimes provide a broader interpretation of various puzzling features of the environment, and so play a prominent part in the intellectual drive to render the surrounding world intelligible."

The Psychology of Rumor is not only an important document meriting the attention of psychologists and all professionals dealing in problems of human affairs, but also an enlightening treatise on the malicious foibles and weaknesses of human beings from the lowliest back-fence gossip to the highest placed propagandist peddling rumor on an international scale.

In addition, it is proof of the fact that psychologists are beginning to understand that not only must principles of behavior be evolved; they must be applied, and it is here that the all-important role of the PR practitioner emerges.

In the past there was a justifiable criticism against psychologists in that

their findings were obscurely reported in scientific journals, and not properly prepared for the interested reader. But psychologists have, in the main, recognized this inadequacy, and are now endeavoring to get scientific fact into the bloodstream of everyday thinking.

The Psychology of Rumor is one important step in this direction, and should help to narrow the gap between the academic psychologist and the PR "actionist." (THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RUMOR, by Gordon W. Allport and Leo Postman. Henry Holt & Co. 247 pp. — \$3.50.)

BARGAINING WITH ORGANIZED LABOR

TESTED TECHNIQUES IN LABOR ARBITRATION

Reviewed by Bernard Tassler, Editor, "American Federationist," Washington, D. C.

HERE ARE TWO timely books designed neither to serve nor to appeal to public relations practitioners, but they have substantial value for PR people just the same. By a careful perusal of these volumes — particularly the first one, *Bargaining With Organized Labor* — the counselor with clients among employers or trade unions can learn a great deal that will help him to perform his important functions more intelligently and more effectively.

Both books cling to their own subject — labor-management relations — and *Tested Techniques in Labor Arbitration* confines itself to one specialized branch, although an increasingly significant one, of the over-all subject. As has long been recognized, however, the relations between workers and employers have vital meaning for a very large percentage of the nation's public relations counselors. For the people in this group who wish to increase their knowledge and understanding of the practical and human aspects of what is surely one of the most consequential (and sometimes tempestu-

ous) relationships in our highly industrialized country, these books should prove most helpful.

From the public relations standpoint, *Bargaining With Organized Labor* is far and away the more valuable work. It has undertaken a much more comprehensive task and carried it out quite ably. In generally commendable fashion, the Messrs. Smyth and Murphy have made clear the attitudes — and the reasons for those attitudes — of unions and employers on issues which acutely concern both parties.

Although the authors have frankly written a guide for management, their book strives hard to be absolutely fair, and on the whole it has succeeded rather remarkably in giving even-handed treatment to controversial topics. It is therefore all the more to be regretted that here and there the presentation is less than completely just. Fortunately, the lapses are not numerous. And even though *Bargaining With Organized Labor* has been written as an aid to employers, the public relations man serving labor — if endowed with no more than a normal share of alertness and perspicacity — will profit every bit as much from a reading of this book as the counselor on the other side.

Whether representatives of management, unions or neither, PR people should find especially useful the highly informative chapters on union security and management security. In these two chapters the authors get to the heart of what organized labor and management respectively want — and why.

"In the final analysis," Mr. Smyth and Mr. Murphy declare, "management can best maintain its functions and freedom of action not through legislation but through astute, ethical collective bargaining and sound industrial relations at the local-plant level."

Surely it is not inappropriate to re-

call here that, for quite some time now, mature public relations practitioners have been strongly advocating efforts to achieve better industrial relations, better community relations and better human relations — all at the local level.

One conspicuous shortcoming of *Bargaining With Organized Labor* must be noted. This is the extreme brevity of the volume's treatment of the place of public opinion in the dealings between unions and employers. Surely the so often decisive role of public opinion in labor-management jousting merits more than three paragraphs.

Tested Techniques in Labor Arbitration, as previously indicated, is much narrower in scope, and it is smaller in size. However, what this less ambitious book set out to do it does accomplish. It has definite, albeit relatively limited, educational value. The public relations counselor who can find time for but one of these two books should spend an evening with *Bargaining With Organized Labor* and pass up Mr. Torrence's production. (*BARGAINING WITH ORGANIZED LABOR*, by Richard C. Smyth and Matthew J. Murphy. Funk & Wagnalls, in association with Modern Industry Magazine. 302 pp. — \$3.75. *TESTED TECHNIQUES IN LABOR ARBITRATION*, by George W. Torrence. Funk & Wagnalls, in association with Modern Industry Magazine. 248 pp. — \$2.50.)

COLLEGE PUBLICITY MANUAL

Reviewed by Kalman B. Druck, Vice President, Carl Nyoir & Associates, Inc., New York City.

THIS BOOK sticks to the assignment of being solely a publicity manual, "emphasizing specific techniques rather than general public relations policy." It was written by eighteen members of the American College Public Relations Association, and edited by W. Emerson Reck, who recently resigned as Director of Public Relations at Colgate University to become Vice President and Gen-

eral Secretary of Wittenberg College, Springfield, Ohio. It is designed as a companion volume to Reck's *Public Relations: A Program for Colleges and Universities*, which deals with the basic public relations challenges and opportunities in the educational field.

Sponsored by the ACPRA and endorsed by the Association of American Colleges and the Department of Higher Education of the National Education Association, the *Manual* provides a comprehensive "how to do it" book for the several thousand people directly concerned with educational publicity. Chapters cover the research, preparation and presentation of publicity through newspapers, magazines, college publications, direct mail, the screen, the platform, radio, displays and exhibits, pictures, and special events. Other chapters cover student recruitment, sports promotion, fund-raising, alumni relations, operation of the publicity office, and a general consideration of the ethics involved.

Special attention is paid in the introductory chapters to the basic types of publicity — attention-arresting, reiterative, and interpretative and to the qualifications demanded of the college publicist. The difference between a sound, over-all public relations program and the use of publicity merely for publicity's sake is pointed out. "Thus it can be seen that public relations and publicity are interdependent and inseparable, that publicity effort can really succeed only if built on public relations soundly based and soundly maintained. It is true that publicity may bring a measure of temporary success even without sound public relations but the institution or the individual thus publicized is certain to face at some future date increased difficulties because of the publicity." (*COLLEGE PUBLICITY MANUAL*, edited by W. Emerson Reck. Harper & Brothers, Publishers. 237 pp. — \$3.00.)

POSTINGS

THE By-laws of the Society require that applications for membership be posted at least 30 days before they are submitted to the Board of Directors or to the Executive Committee for approval. Active members desiring to comment on the following applicants should write the Eligibility Committee, Public Relations Society of America, Inc., 525 Lexington Avenue, New York 17, New York.

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

BABCOCK, LORENE W.—Public Relations Director, Methodist Children's Home Society, Detroit, Mich. *Sponsors:* W. C. Patterson and V. L. Rankin.

BAKER, WILLIAM R.—News Bureau Manager, General Foods Corporation, New York City. *Sponsors:* W. Howard Chase and V. L. Rankin.

BELISLE, EUGENE LOUIS—Vice President, Human Relations, Inc., Boston, Mass., and Associate Professor and Director, School of Public Relations, Boston University. *Sponsors:* Clark Belden and Charles E. Downing.

JOLLY, FRED R.—Assistant Director of Community Relations, Caterpillar Tractor Company, East Peoria, Ill. *Sponsors:* V. L. Rankin and Walter V. McAdoo.

PERSONS, HUBERT C.—Manager, Public Relations Bureau, Portland Cement Association, Chicago, Ill. *Sponsors:* William R. Harshe and Morris B. Rotman.

ROBINSON, CLAUDE E.—President, Opinion Research Corporation, Princeton, N. J. *Sponsors:* W. Howard Chase and V. L. Rankin.

SARASOHN, TRUDIE—Public Relations Director, Community Chest and Council of Social Agencies of Metropolitan Detroit. *Sponsors:* Otis A. Crosby and E. P. Lovejoy.

WILDER, ROBERT G.—Owner, Robert G. Wilder & Company (public relations counsel), Philadelphia, Pa. *Sponsors:* H. E. Bickel and Franklyn Waltman.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

FOX, MAXWELL C.—Public Relations Director, Advertising Council, Inc., New York City. *Sponsors:* J. L. Barrett and K. C. Pratt.

LYONS, GERALD—Director of Publicity, Veterans Hospital Camp Shows, Inc., New York City. *Sponsors:* Sam Fuson and John L. Nanovic.

WARNER, EDWARD L., JR.—Director of Public Relations, Detroit Office, McCann-Erickson, Inc., Detroit, Mich. *Sponsors:* Anthony G. DeLorenzo and William H. McGaughey.

Welcome to New Members

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Public Relations Society of America, Inc. held on January 6, 1949, the following individuals were unanimously elected to membership in the Society, following the required posting of their applications:

ELECTED TO ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

Amlong, William E.—Director of Public Relations, Continental Air Lines, Denver, Colorado.

Brayman, Harold—Director, Public Relations Department, E. I. duPont de Nemours & Company, Wilmington, Delaware.

Drew, James Edward—Associate Director of Public Relations, Lever Brothers Company, Cambridge, Mass.

Freeman, Melvin R.—Public Relations Manager, National Fire Protection Association, Boston, Mass.

Lynch, Mrs. Julie Goss—Director, Western Division, Netherlands Information Bureau, San Francisco, Cal.

Potter, Foster—Publicity Editor, New York State Department of Agriculture, Albany, N. Y.

Schellenger, Harold Kent—Director, Department of Public Relations, Byer & Bowman Advertising Agency, Columbus, Ohio.

ELECTED TO ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

McCarty, John L.—John L. McCarty Public Relations, Amarillo, Texas.